AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT XCVIII

EXHIBITORS DON'T KNOW THEIR CUSTOMERS

Is the exhibitor a reliable source of information on what the public wants? The results of a study just completed by Audience Research Institute indicate that the answer to this age-old question must be an emphatic NO.

A representative cross-section of the public was asked: "Have you ever requested the manager of the movie theater you attend most frequently to show a picture which you especially wanted to see?" Ninety-five per cent replied in the negative.

The same respondents were asked: "Have you ever discussed movies with him?" Ninety per cent said NO, they had never discussed movies with him.

The next question was: "Do you know his name?" Seventy-seven per cent said NO, they did not know his name.

"Would you recognize him if you saw him on the street?" NO, 62 per cent.

All of which tends to confirm the widely-held belief that so far as the vast majority of theatergoers are concerned, the average exhibitor remains anonymous, aloof and unapproachable. He seldom takes the trouble to get acquainted with his customers.

Two of these same questions were also asked about the president of the respondent's bank, the manager of his drug-store and the manager of his grocery. It was found that of all these merchants the theater manager is the least known to the general public. Even bank presidents maintain closer personal contact with their customers.

How can the exhibitor be regarded as a reliable authority on the likes and dislikes of his customers when he never meets more than a tiny minority of them?

The answer is that he might be so regarded if this minority constituted a representative cross-section of his audience. But it doesn't. The ticket-buyers who know their exhibitor are mostly persons of his own age, his

own economic status, and—his own sex. In other words, his own little circle of personal friends. This fact helps to explain why the exhibitor encounters so many "surprises" at his box-office.

It is interesting to speculate on the effect which would be produced if Mr. Schaefer announced the findings of this survey at the next convention of the MPTOA.

QUESTION I: **What theater do you attend most frequently?**

QUESTION II: **Have you ever requested the manager of that theater to show (or book) a picture which you especially wanted to see?**

	YES %	NO %
Habitual theatergoers (once a week or more)	6	94
Irregular theatergoers (less than once a week)	3	97
Persons frequenting circuit theaters	3	97
Persons frequenting independent theaters	10	90
Persons frequenting downtown theaters	2	98
Persons frequenting neighborhood theaters	8	92
ALL THEATERGOERS	5	95

QUESTION III: **Have you ever discussed movies with him?**

	YES %	NO %
Habitual theatergoers (once a week or more)	13	87
Irregular theatergoers (less than once a week)	6	94
Persons frequenting circuit theaters	7	93
Persons frequenting independent theaters	17	83
Persons frequenting downtown theaters	7	93
Persons frequenting neighborhood theaters	14	86
ALL THEATERGOERS	10	90

QUESTION IV: Do you happen to know his name?

		YES %	NO %
Habitual theatergoers (once a week or more)		23	77
Irregular theatergoers (less than once a week)		23	77
Persons frequenting circuit theaters		18	82
Persons frequenting independent theaters		37	63
Prosperous	(Over $50 per week)	26	74
Upper Middle	($30 to $50 per week)	26	74
Middle	($20 to $30 per week)	22	78
Poor	(Under $20 per week)	19	81
Cities Over 500,000		6	94
100,000 to 500,000		18	82
10,000 to 100,000		19	81
Under 10,000		52	48
ALL THEATERGOERS		23	77

QUESTION V: Would you recognize him if you saw him on the street?

	YES %	NO %
Habitual theatergoers (once a week or more)	44	56
Irregular theatergoers (less than once a week)	32	68
Persons frequenting circuit theaters	29	71
Persons frequenting independent theaters	62	38
Persons frequenting downtown theaters	34	66
Persons frequenting neighborhood theaters	42	58
ALL THEATERGOERS	38	62

Two of the questions asked about theater managers were also asked about the president of the respondent's bank, the manager of his drug store and the manager of his grocery.

	Know His Name	*Recognize Him*
	%	%
Grocery Manager	54	86
Drug Store Manager	50	82
Bank President	24	53
Theater Manager	23	38

Princeton, August 12, 1941

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 122

PUBLICITY PENETRATION

The Institute has just completed an analysis of the sixty most recent Indices of Publicity Penetration. This analysis reveals the following important facts:

(1) The average 'want-to-see' vote for RKO pictures is above the industry average with persons over thirty years, but below the industry average with the younger age groups.*

WANT-TO-SEE BY AGE GROUPS

	12-17 %	*18-30* %	*31-up* %	*Total* %
All Pictures	73.4	67.8	65.6	68.5
RKO Pictures	67.6	65.7	66.6	66.3
Difference	−5.8	−2.1	+1.0	−2.2

Although the want-to-see vote for RKO pictures is greatest in the youngest age group, it is in this group that RKO pictures have their *relatively weakest* appeal.

(2) The average want-to-see vote for RKO pictures is above the industry average in the 'prosperous' income group, but below average in the lower income groups.†

WANT-TO-SEE BY INCOME GROUPS

	Prosperous %	*Upper Middle* %	*Lower Middle* %	*Poor* %	*Total* %
All Pictures	66.7	66.3	70.0	70.9	68.5
RKO Pictures	67.1	64.1	68.0	66.7	66.3
Difference	+.4	−2.2	−2.0	−4.2	−2.2

*Only 35 per cent of all tickets are purchased by persons over thirty.

†Only 12 per cent of all tickets are purchased by persons in the 'prosperous' income group.

(3) The average want-to-see vote of RKO pictures is almost up to the industry average in cities with a population in excess of 500,000, but below average elsewhere.

WANT-TO-SEE BY SIZE OF CITY

	Under 10,000 %	10-100,000 %	100-500,000 %	Over 500,000 %	*Total* %
All Pictures	70.5	70.6	67.8	67.6	68.5
RKO Pictures	67.3	67.2	64.8	66.6	66.3
Difference	−3.2	−3.4	−3.0	−1.0	−2.2

(4) The average publicity penetration of RKO pictures is below the industry average in all age groups, and is relatively weakest in the younger age groups.

PUBLICITY PENETRATION BY AGE GROUPS

	12-17 %	*18-30* %	*31-up* %	*Total* %
All Pictures	31.7	32.7	27.3	31.1
RKO Pictures	25.0	26.9	23.4	25.6
Difference	−6.7	−5.8	−3.9	−5.5

(5) The average publicity penetration of RKO pictures is below the industry average in all income groups, and is relatively weakest in the poorer income groups.

PUBLICITY PENETRATION BY INCOME GROUPS

	Prosperous %	*Upper Middle* %	*Lower Middle* %	*Poor* %	*Total* %
All Pictures	35.8	34.2	30.6	26.1	31.1
RKO Pictures	31.2	28.5	24.7	20.5	25.6
Difference	−4.6	−5.7	−5.9	−5.6	−5.5

As might be expected, the average penetration for all pictures is definitely correlated with income—the higher the income, the greater the penetration. The penetration is relatively much higher with the prosperous and upper middle economic groups.

It is interesting that the penetration of RKO pictures, as compared to that of pictures of other studios, is relatively more successful within the prosperous group and *least* successful with the economic segments in which the greatest number of ticket-buyers are found.

(6) The Institute has often pointed out that publicity and advertising campaigns begin too late. Analysis of the sixty most recent Indices yield the following averages:

PUBLICITY PENETRATION BY WEEKS

	BEFORE RELEASE				AFTER RELEASE		
	Three	*Two*	*One*	*0*	*One*	*Two*	*Three*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All Pictures	16.6	20.8	24.3	30.1	37.1	42.4	46.4
RKO Pictures	12.9	15.2	16.8	24.5	32.4	36.7	40.4
Difference	−3.7	−5.6	−7.5	−5.6	−4.7	−5.7	−6.0

If the average publicity penetration of RKO pictures is somewhat below the industry average, it must be remembered that those responsible for RKO advertising and publicity operate under certain handicaps. For example, it is easier for MGM to secure high penetrations for their pictures, which generally boast big marquee names, than it is for RKO to secure high penetrations for *their* pictures, which often lack such publicity naturals. Again, it is difficult for RKO to achieve high penetrations when titles are changed a few weeks prior to release (e. g. SUSPICION and ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY). Lastly, it is unfair to compare the penetration of a campaign which has cost $50,000 with the penetration of a campaign which has cost $100,000.

Princeton, November 19, 1941

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT LXIX

WHEN SHOULD PUBLICITY START?

One day last August Mr. Jock Lawrence was lamenting the fact that his carefully timed publicity campaign for THE WESTERNER had been wasted at the last minute by Mr. Goldwyn suddenly postponing the picture's release for several weeks. Lawrence thought that the publicity would go cold, that the public would forget all he had told them about the picture, and that he would have to begin all over again.

At that time Mr. Lawrence's lamentation looked like a good argument for starting publicity only a week or two before release, always assuming that the public memory was in fact as short as he supposed.

But a study recently completed by Audience Research Institute shows that the public does not easily 'forget' picture publicity.

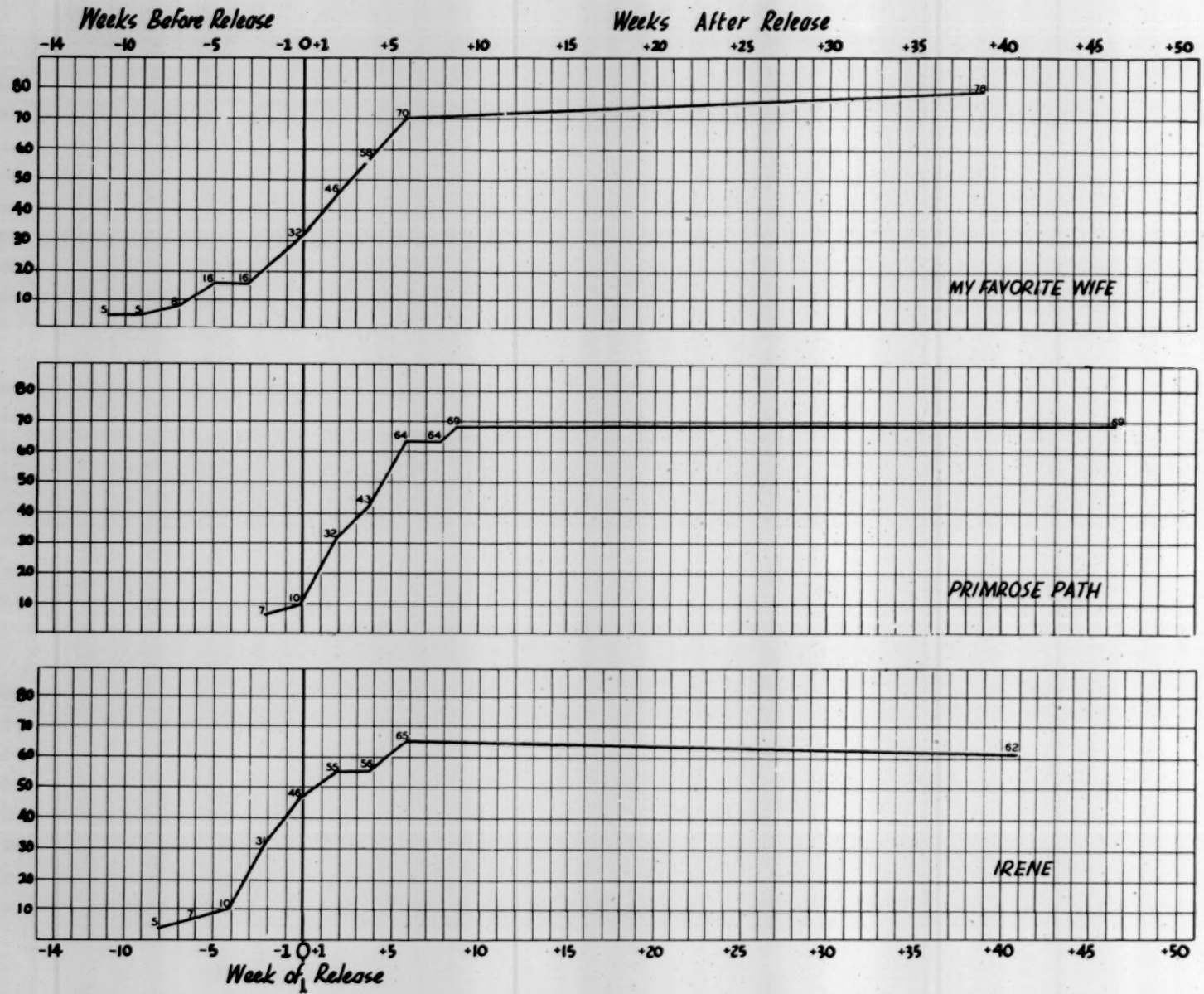
We have measured the publicity penetration of certain RKO pictures *forty weeks after their release*, and we find that they are then at least as high as they were only six weeks after release.

It is interesting to see that the publicity penetration of MY FAVORITE WIFE and PRIMROSE PATH did not amount to much until these pictures had already played their most lucrative situations. The resultant cash loss to the company cannot easily be estimated, but it was undoubtedly substantial.

Consideration of these charts, and of the other charts sent you on January 31, 1941, prompts the conclusion that few publicity campaigns get under way *soon* enough.

To achieve its maximum gross a picture must cross the release line with the highest possible penetration. To do that means starting the campaign many weeks earlier than is now the custom.

Princeton May 3, 1941.


Weeks Before Release
Weeks After Release
-14 -10 -5 -1 0 +1 +5 +10 +15 +20 +25 +30 +35 +40 +45 +50
80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10
5 5 8 16 16 32 46 58 70 78
MY FAVORITE WIFE
7 10 32 43 64 64 69 69
PRIMROSE PATH
5 7 10 31 46 55 58 65 62
IRENE
Week of Release

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 100

ADVERTISING

At a conference in Mr. Schaefer's office some weeks ago, Dr. Gallup was invited to submit plans for a basic advertising procedure which could be applied to all your pictures.

We believe that as a result of (1) Dr. Gallup's studies in the field of advertising research—which have extended over the last nine years, and (2) our detailed studies of RKO penetrations—which have been in progress for the last two years, we are now in a position to draw conclusions which will enable you to increase the net effectiveness of your paid advertising by *at least one hundred per cent.*

The advertising fraternity is accustomed to criticize motion picture advertising as stereotyped and out-of-date. Very seldom, however, do these critics recognize the special handicaps under which motion picture advertisers have to labor.

THE THREE HANDICAPS

(1) There is one fundamental difference between advertising motion pictures and advertising other consumer products. In the case of soup, automobiles and soap you don't *start* your advertising until the product is released to the public, whereas in the case of motion pictures you *stop* your advertising the moment the product has been released.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this difference. But opinions differ as to the kind of strategy it dictates. Most orthodox picture advertisers have seized upon it as a justification for the crude kind of "announcement" advertising to which they are addicted.

That seems to us like an admission of impotence.

We draw an entirely different conclusion. We believe that the essential job which your advertising (like all *pre-natal* advertising) has to do is to *arouse curiosity*.

Your problem therefore becomes a problem of how best to arouse curiosity. Certainly not by crude "announcement" advertising. You can't hope to arouse much curiosity by simply displaying a head-cut of the star, with the title of the picture, the names of the producer, the author and the director.

THE THREE HANDICAPS (Cont'd.)

(2) Motion picture campaigns are prepared under such pressure and on such small budgets that there is seldom either the time or the money for anything more imaginative than the repetition of standard formulae.

(3) The requirements of *billing* (the producer demanding the same size type as the star, etc.) hamstring any attempt to depart from the old formulae.

When once these crippling handicaps are recognized it becomes a matter for congratulation that the men who are responsible for advertising your pictures succeed in reaching the millions they do.

And yet we have the feeling that in this matter of advertising the whole industry is in a rut. Therein lies the tremendous opportunity for RKO to move out ahead.

Consider the present state of affairs, as revealed by the accumulated data of sixty-one Indices of Publicity Penetration:

THE FACTS

(1) While it is true that heavy advertising cannot turn a bad picture into a hit, it is also true that no picture can ever attain its *maximum* gross unless it passes the release line with high publicity penetration.

(2) The publicity penetration of the average A picture is only 24 per cent in the week before release. This admits of improvement.

(3) The publicity penetration of RKO pictures is somewhat below the industry average.

These are the three premises upon which this report has been written. The immediate and specific problem with which it will be concerned is: how to increase the penetration of RKO pictures without increasing the budget allocated to advertising.

WHEN TO ADVERTISE

During the last year we have been able to show that advertising campaigns for most pictures begin too late, with the result that the picture suffers a hurt in its crucial opening weeks.

The old theory that the public *forgets* the advertising of a picture unless it is concentrated in the days immediately preceding release has been exposed as a fallacy.*

*See Report LXIX.

The evidence we have gathered points to the advantage of starting your national advertising for every picture at least *six weeks ahead of the conventional schedule.*

How can you begin advertising earlier without increasing your budget?

It so happens that for many years we have been measuring the number of persons who read advertisements. We have found that both in newspapers and in magazines small space units deliver more readers per dollar spent than large space units. Particularly is this true in the case of motion picture advertisements.

True, a whole page advertisement in a newspaper is read by more persons than a half page. But a whole page is not read by *twice* as many persons as a half page, or anything like it. And so on.

In the same way a color ad in a magazine is read by more persons than a black and white ad, but not by *enough* more to justify the extra cost.

Use Smaller Space Units

We believe that if you use smaller and cheaper space units than you have been accustomed to using, and spread them over a longer period of time, you will not only be able to start your campaigns earlier, but you will also be able to reach *more readers—at no extra cost.*

Familiarity is just as important in selling a picture as in selling a product, and the two important factors in determining the degree of familiarity are *time* and *repetition.*

WHERE TO ADVERTISE

Although producers hope that all their pictures will interest every theatergoer in the country, only one picture has ever come anywhere near to accomplishing this feat. Some pictures are of particular interest to men and to boys, others to women; some are particularly interesting to city dwellers, others to rural people—and so on.

Since this is the case, it becomes essential to make certain that those people who are particularly interested shall be reached. It is imperative to blanket the easiest-to-sell market.

In this sense, advertising a motion picture is essentially no different from advertising any other product. While it is true that a few people with low incomes buy Cadillacs, the market for Cadillacs is concentrated in the upper income brackets, and an advertising program which didn't take this fact into account would waste thousands of dollars in reaching the *hardest-to-sell* group without, at the same time, applying sufficient pressure on the *easiest-to-sell* group.

We believe that hitherto no attempt has been made in a systematic way to find out *what groups will be most interested in any given picture.*

Custom-Built Media Lists for Every Picture

Once you know exactly which segments of the population are the easiest-to-sell for that picture, then the media which will deliver the largest number of persons in that segment, at the lowest cost, can be determined.

Such scientific construction of a media list has been an elementary axiom for many years in almost every field of advertising *except* motion pictures.

We recommend, therefore, that you initiate a policy of custom-built media lists for each individual picture, based on a study of the groups which are easiest to sell for that particular picture.

And we recommend further that no media list should be decided until the following basic question has been answered: *What is the relative cost per thousand of reaching the easiest-to-sell groups on this picture—*

by magazines?
by newspapers?
by spot radio?
by network radio?

Why Only the Amusement Page?

In the case of newspaper campaigns we have this specific suggestion to offer: in addition to advertising on the amusement page, set aside part of your budget for space on those pages which are read by the less frequent theatergoers.

"The Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading"* has revealed the fact that in terms of total number of readers, the amusement page ranks only *fifth.*

In total readership the amusement page is outranked by the picture pages, comic pages, editorial pages, and sport pages; and—in the case of females—the society pages.

The amusement page carries 33 per cent less traffic than the best-read pages.

In the light of these facts, confining your advertising to the amusement page begins to look somewhat unambitious. The people who read this page are likely to be those who are shopping for a movie anyway.

You will secure much higher penetrations if you will spend part of your advertising budget for a given picture on those pages which are read by the huge majority of persons who are *not* shopping for a movie.

***Sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association.**

WHAT TO SAY IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS

Just as no serious attempt is ever made to find out what segments of the population are easiest-to-sell, so no serious attempt is made to find out *what it is* about any given picture that is most likely to get people into the theaters.

The studio which releases a picture apparently is content to *guess* what it is about that picture which will most interest the public. Such guesses may or may not coincide with the public's ideas of what is most attractive about the picture.

Pre-testing Appeals Before Detroit starts advertising their new models, they use research to find out which features in that model will find the readiest acceptance with the motoring public. It is those features which are stressed in the advertising. Such pre-testing of sales appeals is axiomatic in a dozen different industries.

There is no real reason why RKO should not follow this procedure. It has very definite advantages—in terms of sales—over the old-fashioned reliance upon the hunch, the guesswork and the personal opinions of advertising copy-writers.

HOW TO SAY IT

Since we have recommended the use of small spaces instead of large spaces, it is incumbent upon us to suggest ways in which such small spaces could be used to best advantage.

In other words, it is incumbent upon us to outline the kind of steps which you should take *to increase the number of persons who read your advertisements.*

High Product Interest Our studies have shown that motion picture advertising starts with greater "product interest" than any other advertising. That is to say, a far higher percentage of people are interested in knowing about forthcoming pictures than are interested in knowing about new washing machines or new soap. For this reason the fact that an advertisement for a motion picture has the highest reading of any advertisement in a magazine such as LIFE or SATURDAY EVENING POST is no proof of its excellence; even picture ads of mediocre quality achieve this measure of success.

We believe that, if you will make certain technical changes in your advertisements, you can increase the number of persons who read them by at least 100 per cent. Which means, in effect, that you can make your advertisements deliver twice the penetration they are now delivering—at no extra cost.

Perhaps it will help the reader if we enumerate some specific steps, all arising out of reader research, which will increase the number of persons who read your advertisements:

1) USE PHOTOGRAPHS INSTEAD OF DRAWINGS.

Ten years ago 51 per cent of all the illustrations used in magazine advertising were *drawings*, only 49 per cent were *photographs*. Since that time research has revealed the fact that ads in which the main illustration is a photograph average 10 per cent more readers than ads in which the main illustration is a drawing. And so today we find that photographs account for over 70 per cent of all advertisement illustration.

And yet motion picture advertisers, with access to some of the best photographs in the world, are still using enormous quantities of drawings.

2) USE ILLUSTRATIONS WHICH OCCUPY AT LEAST HALF THE AREA OF THE ADVERTISEMENT.

A survey has revealed that in 1932 only 11 per cent of all magazine ads carried an illustration occupying as much as half the total space, while in 1940 the figure had risen to 59 per cent. Research had demonstrated that the attention value of an ad was in direct proportion to the size of its main illustration.

And yet motion picture advertisements are still notable for the small size of their illustrations.

3) DON'T CROP YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS; DON'T DEFACE THEM WITH HEADLINES, MECHANICAL GADGETS OR COPY BLOCKS; DON'T ROUT OUT THEIR BACKGROUNDS; DON'T RETOUCH THEM.

Motion picture advertisers still do all these things in most of their advertisements, years after reader research has proved that such practices reduce attention value. Here are actual figures on 1500 advertisements:

	Attention Value of Advertisements + or — Average %
Illustration cropped	−10
Not cropped	+ 8
Illustration broken into	− 4
Not broken into	+15
Background routed out	− 5
Background left intact	+ 7

Readers are most attracted by natural photographs of a news type. Any treatment which tends to make an illustration look artificial or unnatural reduces the value of the advertisement.

4) SET YOUR COPY ON AN EVEN KEEL.

Ten years ago advertising art directors were addicted to tilting their copy at any angle. Research has subsequently established that with every degree you tilt your copy away from horizontal level you reduce the number of people who read it.

And yet motion picture advertisement are still full of copy tilted at an angle.

5) FORSWEAR REVERSED PLATES AND TINT BLOCKS.

In the field of motion pictures the idea still survives that if you load your ads with enough reversed plates and tint blocks you will, in the classic phrase, "dominate the page."

This theory has no foundation in fact. Reader research has revealed that both reversed plates and tint blocks invariably operate *against* reading. It is straight-forward black and white which secures the highest reading.

6) CLEAN UP YOUR LAYOUTS.

Ten years ago advertising art directors were obsessed with a desire to give their advertisements *design.* As a result you saw complicated layouts, with reversed plates, photo-montages, tint blocks, jazzy hand-drawn lettering and all manner of other gadgetry jumbled together to form an over-all "design."

Meanwhile, however, research has proved that it is the clean straightforward layout which attracts the highest readership; the kind of complex, messy layouts which still characterize motion picture advertising are comparatively unsuccessful.

None of these technical improvements amounts to very much *by itself,* but added up they will make a vast difference to the number of persons who read your advertisements—a difference as great as 100 per cent, in our experience. And they can all be applied without robbing your advertisements of that motion picture flavor which is, we recognize, so essential to their success.

SUMMARY

(1) No picture can attain its *maximum* gross unless it passes the release line with high publicity penetration.

(2) Prior to release, the advertising and publicity campaign for the average A picture reaches only 24 per cent of regular theatergoers. This can be improved.

(3) The publicity penetration for RKO pictures is below the industry average.

(4) Start your advertising at least six weeks earlier than you have been in the habit of starting it.

(5) Use smaller space units. They will deliver more readers at a lower cost, and will enable you to start advertising earlier —without adding to the budget.

(6) Take cognizance of the changes which have followed the march of copy research in other fields of advertising, so as to be sure that your small space advertisements have maximum attention value and reader interest.

(7) Base every campaign on a study of the special factors which are most likely to get the public to see that particular picture.

(8) The essential job which your advertising has to do is to arouse curiosity—to create word-of-mouth publicity *before* the picture is released.

(9) The amusement pages carry 33 per cent less traffic than the best read pages. Continue to use the amusement pages—but always consider the possibility of spending some of the budget on the better-read pages.

(10) Base your selection of media for every campaign on a study of the groups which are easiest-to-sell for that particular picture.

(11) In every case examine the relative cost per thousand of reaching your easiest-to-sell groups—by magazines, by newspapers, by spot radio, and by network radio.

We feel no hesitation in estimating that, if these recommendations are carried into effect, your advertising will reach at least twice as many people as it is now reaching—at no extra cost.

Princeton, August 22, 1941.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 104

PUBLICITY PENETRATION OF PARACHUTE BATTALION

During the week following its world premiere in Atlanta, the publicity penetration of PARACHUTE BATTALION rose from seven per cent to eight per cent.

Seventeen months ago we reported on the effectiveness of two similar premieres—VIRGINIA CITY and YOUNG TOM EDISON (Port Huron). At that time we concluded that the value of such premieres depends on three factors:

1. *The cost of the premiere in relation to the cost of paid advertising.*
2. *The importance of the immediate vicinity as a source of revenue.*

   It was found that the effect of these premieres is concentrated in the immediate vicinity—Nevada, Michigan, Georgia or wherever it may be.

3. *The value of the locality for purposes of national exploitation.*

   In this connection it was found that the governing factors were:

   A. The accessibility of the locale to columnists and critics—not critics from Atlanta, Charlotte, Montgomery, Chattanooga and Nashville, but critics from New York and Hollywood.

   B. The newsworthiness and color of the locale itself, distinct from the picture.

   C. The inclusion of the name of the locale in the title of the picture (DODGE CITY, VIRGINIA CITY, etc.).

We also found evidence to support the conclusion that the value of these premieres was decreasing as they were becoming more commonplace.

In the light of this early report it is not difficult to see why the Atlanta premiere for PARACHUTE BATTALION did not yield a larger increase in national publicity penetration.

It is a pity that the penetration of this picture is not higher, since its "want-to-see" vote stands at 66 per cent—which is greater than the "want-to-see" vote on such comparatively costly pictures as MEET JOHN DOE and MY LIFE WITH CAROLINE. In fact, 66 per cent is only two points below the average for *A* pictures.

If there were ever a medium-budget picture which justified an "emergency barrage" of paid advertising, this is it.

Princeton, September 16, 1941.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT XCI

A SAD CASE

THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES is not an unqualified success at the box-office. Why?

(1) The week before the picture was generally released, only four per cent of all the theatergoers in the United States had heard of it. This is twenty points below average. If, instead of being four per cent, this figure had been *twenty*-four per cent (which is the average for A pictures), the picture would have grossed 16 per cent more dollars than it has grossed.

If the penetration had been 48 per cent (which was the penetration of KITTY FOYLE at the equivalent point of time), THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES would have grossed 35 per cent more dollars than it has grossed.

(2) Of those who *had* heard of THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES, 65 per cent wanted to see it. This is only three points below average for A pictures. Evidently nothing much the matter with the picture itself.

(3) We find that 63 per cent of those persons who have seen THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES *liked it more than they expected to;* the average for "liked it more than expected" is only 49 percent. Here is more evidence that the picture is better than its publicity.

Princeton, June 27, 1941.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT VI

Virginia City Premiere, March 16, 1940

In Report III we set forth the results of our investigation into the effectiveness of the Port Huron premiere of YOUNG TOM EDISON. We now report the results of a similar investigation into the effectiveness of the VIRGINIA CITY premiere.

A nation-wide survey of movie-goers conducted by Audience Research Institute two weeks before the premiere revealed that 16% of movie-goers had then heard or read of VIRGINIA CITY. A second survey conducted during the four days immediately following the premiere showed that the figure had risen to 25%. Two weeks later the figure had reached 61%.

As in our earlier study on Port Huron, it is impossible to determine accurately how much of the rise can be ascribed to the Nevada premiere. It would not be fair to credit the entire increase to the premiere, because VIRGINIA CITY had opened in several other cities, including New York and Chicago, before our final measurement of publicity penetration was obtained. The figure of 61%, therefore, reflects in some measure the effect of local advertising effort.

We will, therefore, have to look further for additional evidence of the specific publicity effect of the premiere. In a separate study conducted during the last few days of March, movie-goers were asked this question:

> "Recently several movies have had their first showing in a place that had something to do with the story. For instance, GONE WITH THE WIND had its first showing in Atlanta, Georgia. Can you remember if any of these movies (PRIMROSE PATH, YOUNG THOMAS EDISON, VIRGINIA CITY, DR. EHRLICH'S MAGIC BULLET) had such a premiere?"

PRIMROSE PATH and DR. EHRLICH were included to provide a measure of the guessing in answer to this question; it proved to be insignificant. Results were as follows:

	Knew of premiere but could not identify locale	Identified locale	Total knowing of premiere	No Knowledge of premiere
VIRGINIA CITY	10%	22%	32%	68%
YOUNG TOM EDISON	16%	5%	21%	79%
PRIMROSE PATH	1%	—	1%	99%
DR. EHRLICH	1%	—	1%	99%

The most significant fact in the above table is that one movie-goer in every three (32%) was aware that VIRGINIA CITY had a special premiere. This fact is especially interesting in relation to the proportion of persons who had heard of the movie at that time. That figure, as reported above, was 61%. In other words, half the people who had heard or read anything about VIRGINIA CITY knew specifically that it had opened on location.

It seems justified to conclude from these facts that the VIRGINIA CITY premiere succeeded in effectively publicizing the picture.

This evidence, however, does not warrant a general conclusion applicable to all openings on location. As pointed out in our report on the Port Huron premiere of YOUNG TOM EDISON, the value of such openings must vary widely with the picture. It seems to depend on three factors:

1. *The cost of the premiere in relation to the cost of other kinds of advertising.*

   Even in the case of VIRGINIA CITY where it seems evident that the premiere was effective, the justification of the device still hinges on the question of cost.

   While the picture has reached a high level of publicity penetration, it has not broken any records. It would therefore seem fair to conclude that, if the cost of the premiere created *additional* expense beyond the normal advertising and publicity appropriation for a picture of this class, it would be open to question whether the premiere was justified.

   On the other hand, if the expenditure on the premiere did not increase the normal appropriation, but merely diverted funds from other publicity channels, then the device seems to have been justified.

2. *The importance of the area surrounding the location as a source of revenue.*

   The effectiveness of these premieres is found to be enormously greater in the immediate vicinity than in the country at large. More than 90% of movie-goers in Nevada (107 were interviewed in this state) had heard or read of the picture, and *all* these people knew about the premiere. But since Nevada contributes such an insignificant proportion of the total box-office receipts, this local penetration is of little more than academic interest.

3. *The suitability of the location for purposes of national exploitation.*

   The VIRGINIA CITY premiere received a large volume of newspaper publicity, and while part of this was undoubtedly due to the fact that Hollywood columnists could more easily be taken to Nevada than to Michigan, it would also seem fair to conclude that editors consider Virginia City an intrinsically more newsworthy locale than Port Huron.
   Further, while 66% of those movie-goers who knew about the VIRGINIA CITY premiere could also identify its locale, only 24% of those who knew about the YOUNG TOM EDISON premiere had registered the name of Port Huron. This evidence indicates that it is an asset if the name of the picture ties in with the site of the premiere.

One final table is worth presenting. In addition to the roster question reported above, specifically mentioning VIRGINIA CITY, movie-goers were asked this spontaneous-mention question:

> "Recently several movies had their first showing in a place that had something to do with the story. For instance GONE WITH THE WIND had its first showing in Atlanta. Can you think of any other pictures that have had such special openings?"

Replies were as follows:

	%*
VIRGINIA CITY	13
UNION PACIFIC	10
DODGE CITY	10
YOUNG TOM EDISON	3
All Other	24
None	52

The significant point in this table is the fact that two pictures which are now a year old, UNION CITY and DODGE CITY, were recalled nearly as often as VIRGINIA CITY and more often than YOUNG TOM EDISON.

This suggests that the value of the device may decrease as it becomes more commonplace.

Prinecton, April 22, 1940

* Replies exceed 100% as some respondents named more than one film.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT III

PORT HURON

At our meeting in Hollywood on February 14, Mr. Schaefer asked for an investigation into the effectiveness of special location openings, such as the Port Huron premiere for "Young Tom Edison".

A nation-wide survey of movie-goers, conducted by the Audience Research Institute three weeks after the Port Huron premiere, has revealed the following facts:

1. The Publicity Penetration of "Young Tom Edison" has risen in Michigan to the remarkable figure of 70%.

2. The number of people in Michigan who have *specific knowledge* about the premier in Port Huron has reached the equally noteworthy figure of 42%. The premiere was thus markedly successful in publicizing the picture in the Michigan area.

3. The Publicity Penetration of "Young Tom Edison" in the rest of the country, outside Michigan, rose from 21% on January 26 to 54% on February 29. The Port Huron premiere took place in the period in which this very big increase in Publicity Penetration occurred, but it is impossible to attribute any definite proportion of the increase to the premiere.

From this evidence it appears that the value of a location premiere must depend on:

1. The importance of the area surrounding the location as a source of revenue.

2. The suitability of that location for purposes of *national* exploitation.

3. The cost of the premiere in relation to the cost of other kinds of advertising.

Undoubtedly, the value of location premieres must vary widely with the picture. Next week we shall study the effectiveness of the "Virginia City" premiere of March 17.

March 21, 1940

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT LXX

THE 9 O'CLOCK PLAN

On March 9, 1941, we received instructions to poll the theatergoing public in New York City on their attitude towards the 9 O'Clock Plan.

Before we could begin our survey we found it necessary to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of some of the problems involved in the operation of the Plan. In the course of this preliminary study, two "pilot" surveys were undertaken:

1. Fifty-six theater managers were interviewed—twenty-two RKO managers, fourteen Loew's managers and twenty "other" managers. Our report on what these various managers think about the 9 O'Clock Plan was rendered on April 16. Seventy-three per cent of those interviewed were found to be opposed to the Plan.
2. Before our final questionnaire was decided a trial questionnaire was tested in New York. This trial questionnaire revealed these among other facts:
   a. Not everyone who attends motion picture theaters understands what is meant by "main feature". In some houses where the main feature is shown last, many of the patrons speak of it as the "second feature" simply because it goes on after the B feature.
   b. Some people who actually attend theaters on the 9 O'Clock Plan do not realize that the Plan exists, while a few who attend theaters that are not on the Plan are under the erroneous impression that the main feature is shown in these houses at 9 P. M.

WHERE THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

Interviewing for the main survey was conducted in Central Park West, Harlem, the Washington Square district*, Flushing, Bayridge, Bushwick and Williamsbridge. The interviews were conducted on the street, in homes, in offices, in public buildings, in stores and in parks.

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED

The cross-section used in this survey contained a sample of males and females of all ages and of all income levels, each in proportion to its number among the entire theatergoing public in the City of New York. In addition, a sufficient number of Negroes, Jews and Italians were questioned to enable us to present separate figures for these groups.

*Included because it has 7 neighborhood theaters *not* on the Plan.

The accuracy of any sampling poll depends on the extent to which the persons interviewed represent a perfect cross-section of the total voting public. In this case the persons interviewed were selected to represent an accurate cross-section of the total theatergoing public.

CONCLUSIONS

It was not the purpose of this poll to provide a final answer to the general question whether the 9 O'Clock Plan is a good thing or a bad thing, but rather to provide such detailed information for various segments of the population of New York City as would help you in arriving at your own conclusion.

We find that 46 per cent like the Plan, while 43 per cent prefer the old schedule and 11 per cent express no preference.

As was to be expected, we find that the Plan is most popular with the minority who finish their evening meal after 8:00 P. M. and with those who prefer single features.

Princeton, May, 1941.

HOW MANY HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE 9 O'CLOCK PLAN?

The first problem assigned to us was to find out what proportion of all New York theatergoers know about the 9 O'Clock Plan. Each person in the entire cross-section was therefore asked for a "Yes" or "No" answer to this question:

> *"The last showing of the main feature in some theaters starts on week-day evenings at 9 or 9:30 instead of the more usual 10:30. Have you heard about this Plan?"*

Three out of every five persons (60 per cent) answered YES. Two out of five (40 per cent) had not heard about the Plan.

This result will be startling to those managers who had previously volunteered the opinion that by now everyone in New York must know about the Plan.

	Have Heard %	*Have Not Heard* %
ALL PERSONS INTERVIEWED	60	40
MALES	61	39
FEMALES	59	41
AGE GROUPS		
12 to 17 years old	59	41
18 to 30 years old	66	34
31 to 44 years old	61	39
45 and over	49	51
INCOME GROUPS		
Prosperous (Over $50 per week)	66	34
Middle ($30 to $50 " ")	69	31
Lower Middle ($20 to $30 " ")	57	43
Poor (Under $20 " ")	51	49
RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS		
Italian	40	60
Jewish	71	29
Negro	55	45
All others	60	40
FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE		
Once a week and up	66	34
2 to 3 times a month	51	49
Once a month	43	57
THOSE WHO FREQUENT THEATERS ON THE PLAN	62	38
THOSE WHO FREQUENT THEATERS NOT ON THE PLAN	54	46

DO THEATERGOERS PREFER THE 9 O'CLOCK PLAN?

The next part of our assignment was to find out what proportion of the motion picture public likes the Plan better than the old schedule.

The procedure employed was to hand the respondent a card on which were printed two schedules — the old schedule and the 9 O'Clock Plan, and to ask this question: "Here are two schedules of movie programs at double-feature theaters. One schedule shows the main feature coming on at 6 o'clock and at 9 o'clock; the other shows the main feature coming on at 7:30 and at 10:30. Which of those two schedules is more convenient to you personally?"

"B" or Second Feature 6:00 P. M. **MAIN "A" FEATURE 7:30 P. M.** — **"B" or Second Feature 9:00 P. M.** **MAIN "A" FEATURE 10:30 P. M.**	**MAIN "A" FEATURE 6:00 P. M.** **"B" or Second Feature 7:30 P. M.** — **MAIN "A" FEATURE 9:00 P. M.** **"B" or Second Feature 10:30 P. M.**

Forty-six per cent voted for the 9 O'Clock Plan while 43 per cent preferred the old schedule and 11 per cent expressed no preference. This result shows a small majority in favor of the Plan, but our experience is that most of the "no preference" vote really favors the *status quo*—in this case the old schedule.

	Prefer Old Schedule %	*Prefer 9 O'Clock Plan* %	*No Preference* %
ALL PERSONS INTERVIEWED	43	46	11
MALES	46	42	12
FEMALES	39	50	11
AGE GROUPS			
12 to 17 years old	41	42	17
18 to 30 years old	46	48	6
31 and over	39	47	14
INCOME GROUPS			
Prosperous (Over $50 per week)	57	40	3
Middle ($30 to $50 " ")	44	50	6
Lower Middle ($20 to $30 " ")	41	45	14
Poor (Under $20 " ")	35	46	19
USUAL PRICE PAID (Inc'd Tax)			
Those paying under 25¢	36	39	25
Those paying 25 to 35¢	43	50	7
Those paying 36 to 40¢	51	41	8
Those paying over 40¢	45	50	5

	Prefer Old Schedule %	*Prefer 9 O'Clock Plan* %	*No Preference* %
RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS			
Italian	46	40	14
Jewish	39	54	7
Negro	38	45	17
All others	45	45	10
FINISH EVENING MEAL*			
Before 7 o'clock (44 per cent of total)	43	41	16
7:00 to 8:00 (41 per cent of total)	43	49	8
8:00 and after (15 per cent of total)	40	54	6
TIME OF ARRIVAL AT THEATER*			
7:00 to 7:59 (20 per cent of total)	61	37	2
8:00 to 8:59 (27 per cent of total)	39	58	3
9:00 onwards (14 per cent of total)	45	47	8
THOSE PREFERRING DOUBLE FEATURES	45	42	13
THOSE PREFERRING SINGLE FEATURES	40	53	7

*See page 6.

DOES THE PLAN FIT BED-TIMES?

One of the main objectives of the 9 O'Clock Plan is to get patrons into bed earlier. It is argued that theatergoing has always involved an undesirable upheaval in the daily routine of the average man, that every time he is kept up past his normal bed-time he feels fatigued the next morning, and that in general theatergoing should be made as much a part of his regular routine as is the purchase of a package of cigarettes.

This argument is often countered by the assertion that few if any theatergoers are kept up beyond their bed-time. What is the truth?

In our survey we asked New York theatergoers: "When you go to the movies do you plan to stay up later than usual?" No less than 43 per cent replied in the affirmative—a figure which is in line with our previous finding (July 1940) that 40 per cent of the population of the United States are kept up beyond their bed-time whenever they go to the theater.

DOES THE PLAN FIT DINNER-TIMES?

Another objective of the 9 O'Clock Plan is to make theatergoing more convenient for those who dine late. We find that only 15 per cent of all New York theatergoers finish their evening meal after 7:59.

Finish Evening Meal	%
Before 6 o'clock	9
6:00 to 6:29	14
6:30 to 6:59	21
7:00 to 7:29	25
7:30 to 7:59	16
8:00 to 8:29	7
8:29 onwards	8
	100

Here are the times at which New Yorkers arrive at the theater, as revealed by our survey:

Arrive at Theater	%
Before 6 o'clock	35
6:00 to 6:29	3
6:30 to 6:59	1
7:00 to 7:29	9
7:30 to 7:59	11
8:00 to 8:29	14
8:30 to 8:59	13
9:00 to 9:29	9
9:30 to 9:59	2
9:59 onwards	3
	100

DO THEATERGOERS PREFER 9 O'CLOCK OR 9:30?

All those who had voted for the Plan were asked whether they would prefer to have the main feature go on at 9 or 9:30. Seventy-six per cent voted for 9 o'clock, 13 per cent voted for 9:30, while 11 per cent expressed no preference.

	Prefer 9 O'Clock %	*Prefer 9:30* %
ALL PERSONS VOTING FOR THE PLAN	76	13
MALES	75	15
FEMALES	77	12
AGE GROUPS		
12 to 17 years old	74	16
18 to 30 years old	75	16
31 to 44 years old	76	10
45 and over	80	8
INCOME GROUPS		
Prosperous (Over $50 per week)	81	11
Middle ($30 to $50 " ")	77	10
Lower Middle ($20 to $30 " ")	73	16
Poor (Under $20 " ")	74	15
USUAL PRICE PAID (Inc'd Tax)		
Those paying under 25¢	72	16
Those paying 25 to 35¢	74	13
Those paying 36 to 40¢	81	11
Those paying over 40¢	76	14
FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE		
Once a week and up	74	15
2 to 3 times a month	78	10
Once a month	83	12

NEW YORKERS PREFER DOUBLE FEATURES

To round out the information obtained by this study on the likes and dislikes of New York theatergoers, it was thought advisable to include a question on double *versus* single features.

We find that 63 per cent vote for double features and only 37 per cent for single features. Here are the breakdowns on this question for each segment in New York City:

	Prefer Single Features %	*Prefer Double Features* %
ALL PERSONS INTERVIEWED	37	63
MALES	36	64
FEMALES	39	61
AGE GROUPS		
12 to 17 years old	16	84
18 to 30 years old	42	58
31 to 44 years old	45	55
45 and over	40	60
INCOME GROUPS		
Prosperous (Over $50 per week)	55	45
Middle ($30 to $50 " ")	47	53
Lower Middle ($20 to $30 " ")	35	65
Poor (Under $20 " ")	21	79
USUAL PRICE PAID (Inc'd Tax)		
Those paying under 25¢	18	82
Those paying 25 to 35¢	33	67
Those paying 36 to 40¢	35	65
Those paying over 40¢	52	48
RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS		
Italian	26	74
Jewish	49	51
Negro	16	84
All Others	35	65
FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE		
Once a week and up	33	67
2 to 3 times a month	49	51
Once a month	47	53

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT LI

A GENERALIZATION EXAMINED

Writing in the magazine section of last Sunday's N. Y. TIMES, Bosley Crowther refers to "the *established fact* that filmgoers' tastes are largely determined by the female customers". The italics are ours.

Our studies have proved that, like so many other "established facts", this hoary old generalization needs so much qualification that it amounts in fact to no more than a superstition. Like the mythical 85,000,000 weekly attendance, the theory of female predominance has too long been taken for granted.

It is based on two premises. First, that upwards of 65 per cent of the film audience is female—which is untrue. Second, that choice of picture is generally decided by the sweetheart, wife or mother—which is exaggerated.

Our studies show that the *average* proportion of men and women is 49.5 per cent men and 50.5 per cent women, which happens to be very near the population split.

You will find just as many box-office successes among the pictures whose appeal is predominantly to men, as among the pictures whose appeal is predominantly to women.

The accompanying chart shows the male/female appeal of fifty-three pictures released during the last year, as reflected by the proportion of men and women in their audiences. This chart demonstrates that lack of appeal for women is no handicap, provided it is counterbalanced by appeal for men.

As a matter of fact, the average box-office performance of the pictures with predominant female appeal was almost exactly the same as the average box-office performance of the pictures with predominant male appeal.

Of the ten highest grossing pictures on the chart, four appealed more to men, four appealed more to women, and two appealed equally to men and women.

It is amusing to speculate what would happen to a studio which discarded Mr. Crowther's superstition and deliberately set out to make pictures for men. One thing is certain—the other studios, the trade papers and the critics would jeer, smug in their acceptance of the old tradition. But the cash result of such originality is not so easy to predict.

Do women exercise a controlling influence on their menfolk's choice of picture? We have studied the problem with some care, and we find that women influence the selection only slightly more often than men. Their influence is based not so much upon their prerogatives as women, as upon their greater knowledge of pictures; the average publicity penetration is higher with women than with men.

Mr. Bosley Crowther perpetuates another myth: "The preference of women for masculine stars is basic". He might have added, with equal truth, that the world is flat.

Here are the facts:

(1) Seventy-eight per cent of the female stars are more popular with women than with men, including such "romantic" personalities as Myrna Loy, Ginger Rogers, Jean Arthur, Jeanette MacDonald, Irene Dunne, Carole Lombard, Loretta Young and Norma Shearer.

(2) Seventy per cent of the male stars are more popular with men than with women. And the first thirteen stars, as ranked by men, are all males.

The traditional interpretation of marquee value entirely in terms of sex appeal fails to explain these facts. Obviously there are other factors underlying marquee values. One of the most important is *self-identification*—the tendency of men and women to project themselves into the situations enacted on the screen, to imagine themselves in the position of the star.

That is why, on the average, the preference of women is for female stars, and the preference of men is for male stars.

This finding is the exact reverse of what all "experienced showmen" have been brought up to believe. But it is in line with the discoveries of modern psychologists, and it is consistent with the whole escapist theory of entertainment.

Princeton, February 22, 1941.

	BOX OFFICE IN RKO THEATRES	PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES IN AUDIENCE
		0 20 40 60 80 100
Rebecca	149	
The Letter	100	
All This and Heaven Too	111	
Pride and Prejudice	101	
Waterloo Bridge	92	
New Moon	98	
It's a Date	119	
Kitty Foyle	153	
Primrose Path	104	
Philadelphia Story	—	
No, No, Nanette	80	
My Love Came Back	87	
T. K. W. T. W.	82	
Lucky Partners	96	
Hired Wife	104	
Lillian Russell	107	
Susan and God	71	
The Man I Married	81	
Irene	95	
Maryland	71	
The Doctor Takes a Wife	100	
Mortal Storm	88	
Road to Singapore	132	
Down Argentine Way	105	
My Favorite Wife	136	
Boom Town	190	
Comrade X	137	
Johnny Apollo	92	
Buck Benny Rides Again	101	
The Great Dictator	—	
Chad Hanna	—	
North West Mounted Police	187	
Hunchback of Notre Dame	175	
Torrid Zone	86	
Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet	85	
Thief of Bagdad	109	
Santa Fe Trail	131	
You'll Find Out	94	
Love Thy Neighbor	126	
Sea Hawk	119	
Abe Lincoln in Illinois	78	
They Drive By Night	117	
Boys From Syracuse	86	
Ghost Breakers	97	
Typhoon	85	
Ramparts We Watch	67	
Knute Rockne	124	
Fighting 69th	138	
The Westerner	116	
Virginia City	122	
Twenty Mule Team	63	
Arizona	105	
Return of Frank James	98	
		0 20 40 60 80 100

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT LXXXII

MALES *versus* FEMALES

An article by Frederick Lewis in the June 7 LIBERTY informs us that 80 per cent of all theatergoers are females. In REPORTS XIX and LI we disposed of this superstition by reporting our finding that females account for only 51 per cent of all attendance.

However, some people could still argue that females exercise greater influence than males on the choice of picture—wives picking their husbands' pictures, etc.

A nation-wide study just completed by Audience Research Institute shows that this is not the whole story.

It is true that when mixed couples attend together—girl friend with boy friend, husband with wife, brother with sister, etc.—the female is more often the chooser of the film. But men attend the theater *alone* so much more often than women that the latter tendency counteracts the former.

The net result is that in fifty-one cases out of every hundred the picture is chosen by a female, while in the remaining forty-nine cases the picture is chosen by a male.

As a sidelight on this subject it is interesting to report another recent finding by this Institute. Sixty-eight per cent of all tickets are actually *paid for* by males.

Princeton, June 2, 1941.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT XIX

VARIATIONS IN THE COMPOSITION OF AUDIENCES

For many years it has been generally supposed that the average theatre audience is predominantly female, and estimates as high as 65% female have passed unchallenged.

A study just completed by Audience Research Institute reveals that such estimates are completely inaccurate. The average sex composition of film audiences is 50.5% female and 49.5% male.

This finding is based on a check of 54,462 theatre-goers outside 50 theatres throughout the United States over a period of one week, including matinees and evening performances. It was confirmed by a second survey in which a national cross-section of theatre-goers were questioned as to the pictures they had seen in recent weeks.

Our survey revealed another fact which should be of very real value to RKO Radio. It is this: However much producers may try to give their pictures universal appeal, there is in fact considerable variation in the composition of audiences from picture to picture.

For example, the audiences for REBECCA were 71% female, while the audiences for THE FIGHTING 69TH were only 38% female.

The *age* composition of audiences likewise varies widely from picture to picture. Both BABES IN ARMS and SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON attracted 33% more than the normal proportion of children between the ages of twelve and seventeen. By contrast the audiences for ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS were 28% above normal in their proportion of persons *over 31 years.*

There is an even greater variation in the composition of audiences by income groups. Thus the proportion of the "Prosperous" group in the audiences for MY FAVORITE WIFE was 55% *above* normal, while the proportion of "Prosperous" in the audiences for ROAD TO SINGAPORE was 33% *below* normal.

Again, some pictures attract an unusual number of those persons who go to the movies less than five times a year. A notable example was GONE WITH THE WIND, which ran 110% above normal in this respect.

It is now possible for the audience appeal of every picture to be analyzed *before production.*. And one of the practical applications of this procedure is that it should enable your publicity department to aim their advertising with accuracy at those segments of the market for which each picture is found to have greatest appeal.

Such precision should reduce the purchase of waste circulation, and so save RKO money.

Princeton, July 29, 1940

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT XXV

COMMUNISM AND HOLLYWOOD

In a nation-wide survey conducted between August 22 and August 27, 1940, Audience Research Institute sought to measure the damage caused by recent allegations of Communism in the motion picture industry.

The survey revealed that these allegations have had a very high "publicity penetration", but the evidence indicates that—up to now—most theatre-goers are not influenced by an actor's political color. It is possible that, if Mr. Dies were able to *prove* his charges, the attitude of the theatre-going public might undergo a change; but even that does not appear as certain.

A representative cross-section of all theatre-goers were asked whether they had noticed the recent newspaper stories about Communism in Hollywood. Two theatre-goers out of every three (66 per cent) said YES, they had noticed them.

When respondents were asked to name any Hollywood stars "who are supposed to be Communists", 52 per cent—a remarkably high proportion—were able to name one or more. The personalities mentioned most frequently were:

	Named by %
James Cagney	37
Fredric March	19
Humphrey Bogart	17
Jean Muir	13
Franchot Tone	6
Lionel Stander	4
Melvyn Douglas	4
George Raft	3
Francis Lederer	3

Respondents were next asked: "Would the fact that a movie star is a Communist make any difference to you if you wanted to see his pictures?"

A substantial majority (68 per cent) admitted that *it would make no difference.* Most of these persons pointed out that they go to the movies in search of entertainment and that the political creed of the players is a matter of indifference to them. Typical were the following comments:

"To be truthful it would not—though I suppose I should say it would."
Housewife, Age 43, husband a bus-driver in N. Y. C.

"I don't care what their political beliefs are."
Receiving clerk, Age 22, in Tampa department store.

"I don't care none about their politics."
Junk-cart man, Age 19, in Chicago.

"He's a movie actor, not a politician. If he stays out of politics, I don't care what he does."
Salesman, Age 19, for steel company, Boston.

"Why would it?—It's the show I want to see."
Boy, Age 16, on fountain curb service in Lincoln, Neb.

On the other hand 29 per cent said that the fact that a movie star is a Communist *would* make a difference to them. Many of these persons replied in terms of money, saying that they were reluctant to contribute to the financial resources of a Communist. A bricklayer in Baltimore put it this way: "They get a lot of money for acting. You never know what they might do with it."

The same sentiment was expressed by the wife of a Johnstown steel engineer, who told our interviewer: "I wouldn't want him to have my money. I wouldn't want to contribute to anybody like that." And a Chicago salesgirl: "I'd be ashamed to contribute to their salaries by seeing their pictures."

Other respondents were righteously indignant, and in some cases the reaction was so jingoistic that its sincerity might be called in question.

A large number of respondents—unwilling to believe anything so unpleasant—dismissed the whole subject as newspaper gossip, untrue, impossible, or "propaganda," while a handful of theatre-goers in the lowest income group expressed sympathy with Communism.

It is remarkable that of the six stars named most frequently as Communists only *one*—Franchot Tone—registered a decline in marquee value between March and August 1940. Cagney, March, Bogart, and Raft registered small gains, and Douglas showed no change. In the case of Tone it is probably prolonged absence from the screen which caused the decline.

Princeton, September 10, 1940

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT XXIX

INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE

DIVORCE

In a nation-wide survey conducted between September 5 and September 9, 1940 Audience Research Institute asked a representative cross-section of theatre-goers: "Suppose you just found out your favorite star had got a divorce. Would you stay away from that star's pictures because of that?" Only 4 per cent replied to this question in the affirmative, 96 per cent saying that the star's divorce would make no difference.

Typical were the following comments:

"Heck, what do I care about a person's private problems".
"It wouldn't bother me any".
"What's that got to do with acting ability?"
"Divorce is practically a custom now".
"It doesn't mean anything, especially out there".
"That's no crime nowadays certainly".
"I've been divorced myself—it doesn't mean anything".
"If we did that we'd never go to the movies".

A few persons admitted that divorce would actually make their favorite stars "more interesting".

In order to make the question specific, we asked respondents whether they had read about Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh getting divorces. 58 per cent had read about it, 42 per cent had not.

Those who knew about the Leigh-Olivier divorces were asked: "Would that make any difference to you if you wanted to see their pictures?" 94 per cent replied that it would make no difference. Said a typical theatre-goer: "They're *fine actors* even though they may be marital failures".

The results of this survey demonstrate that divorce has little or nothing to do with the factors which keep people away from the theatre. At the same time, although it does not appear to have any *direct* effect on box-office, news of frequent and sensational divorces still provides ammunition for the pressure groups.

SPORT SHORTS

A member of this Institute recently complained about the subjects selected by Hollywood for sports shorts. She pointed out that although she has never been on a golf course in her life and has no interest whatsoever in that game, she is constantly obliged to sit through six hundred feet of tedious instruction from a golf professional.

This complaint prompted us to measure the extent of public interest in twenty-four different sports subjects. The results of our poll may be useful to the editors of RKO Pathé Sportscope.

A representative cross-section of theatre-goers were asked this question: "Movie theatres often show short pictures dealing with sports. I wonder if you'd mind telling me which of these sports would interest you as subjects for a movie short?" The voting was as follows:

1. Football
2. Swimming
3. Ice skating
4. Skiing
5. Baseball
6. Tennis
7. Basketball
   Horse racing
9. Horseback riding
10. Roller skating
    Fishing
12. Yachting
    Hunting
    Golf
    Bowling
    Hockey
17. Track
    Bicycling
    Archery
20. Polo
    Billiards
22. Badminton
23. Handball
24. Lacrosse

As might be expected, there was considerable difference in voting by sex. Swimming, ice skating, skiing, tennis, horseback riding, roller skating, bicycling, archery and badminton were found to interest women more than they interest men. The reverse was found to be true of football, baseball, basketball, fishing, hunting, hockey, track, billiards, handball and lacrosse. In five cases interest was found to be approximately equal among men and women: horse racing, yachting, golf, bowling and polo.

ESTIMATES OF PAST ATTENDANCE

Our predictions are as good as our cross-section is representative of the entire theatre-going public. A good test of the accuracy of our cross-section is provided by a comparison of pictures seen by persons interviewed with the actual box-office ranking of those pictures. We recently made such a test when we asked theatre-goers to tell us which of a list of seven motion pictures they had already seen. Their replies ranked the pictures in this order of box-office performance:

		Actual order as shown by RKO Classification
1.	Northwest Passage	1
2.	Buck Benny Rides Again	3
3.	Ghost Breakers	4
4.	Virginia City	2
5.	Waterloo Bridge	5
6.	Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet	6
7.	The Light That Failed	7

In this case the coefficient of correlation between our estimate and actual box-office performance was .89.

Princeton, October 4, 1940